

Because of our coordinated effort, North Carolina is making progress in the war against death and destruction on the highways. The inspection program is a success. More troopers patrol our highways. Our young drivers are better trained. Diligence in licensing has removed many potentially dangerous drivers from the highways. Our roads are being made safer. The Traffic Safety Research Center is in operation. Reflectorized license tags are in use. A new court system has been launched. The Traffic Safety Authority has coordinated the new and improved safety programs designed by the departments and agencies involved with traffic safety.

We are generally pleased with the initial success of our program. However, too many of our people are still dying on the highways and many others are maimed. Our task is becoming increasingly more difficult. The number of vehicles on our highways is now over 2.5 million. The number of drivers, particularly young drivers, is increasing. People are driving more. The Traffic Safety Authority and I have inventoried our safety programs and have assigned priorities to needed additions.

I recommend

—A strengthening of our inspection program.

—Additional highway patrolmen.

—A revision of licensing procedures to allow those mentally or physically incapable of safe operation of a vehicle to be more easily recognized.

—Laws arranging for special testing and licensing of motorcycle operators, safety equipment for the machine, and restrictions on number of passengers.

—The means for identification and removal of the cause for the alarming increase in one-car fatal accidents and pedestrian fatalities.

—Better preparation and equipment for driver education instructors.

ELECTION LAWS

There is a need for improvement in the Election Laws of North Carolina. This is evident from the report of the Election Laws Revision Commission. The Commission was authorized by the 1965 General Assembly. Three members were appointed by me, two were named by the Speaker of the House, and two were named by the Lieutenant Governor. Senator Oral Yates was chairman. I recommend your careful consideration of the report.

In addition, the State Board of Elections has made several recommendations pertaining to the election laws. The Board urges the adoption of the loose-leaf registration system by all counties, the requiring of each voter to sign the poll book and the certification of all civilian return absentee ballot envelopes. I also recommend your approval of the suggestions of the Board of Elections.

North Carolina is feeling the terrible impact of the war in Viet Nam, perhaps more than many of our sister states. Our sons and daughters have